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The Women's Development Program in Rajasthan

A Case Study in Group Formation for Women's Development

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Through awareness-building and group formation, rural women in several districts in India have realized that deprivation is not unchangeable, that alternatives exist, that they are competent enough to choose between alternatives, and that they are not alone.

This paper — a product of the Women in Development Division, Population and Human Resources Department — was prepared as a background paper for the report on Gender and Poverty in India. Copies of this paper are available free from the World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433. Please contact Lynn Bennett, room F5-009, extension 82772 (May 1992, 94 pages).

Das presents the Women's Development Program (WDP) — launched in six districts in Rajasthan, India in 1984, and now extending to nine — as a case study in awareness-building and group formation among rural women.

A departure from the traditional pattern of viewing women as the objects of welfare, WDP has been a distinct success. Rural women have realized that their deprivation is not unchangeable, that alternatives exist, that they are competent enough to choose between alternatives, and that they are not alone.

One important feature of the project document was that it was provisional and tentative, essentially a guide to structure and financial patterns. Other programs focus on strengthening delivery systems; WDP's sole aim was to form groups that would consolidate themselves for their own development — these groups, once formed, would initiate any action they needed and decided upon.

The second important element of the project document was the degree of freedom visualized

for women's groups and nongovernment organizations. WDP stressed the need to build awareness and confidence among women as essential to integrating them into the development process.

The institutional perspective of a *place* or center where women can be offered continuing education and training gave way to the concept of an *informal network* of women's groups. Education was defined as the acquisition of knowledge, which may not necessarily mean literacy. It could even mean the acquisition of skills for generating or controlling resources.

WDP has demonstrated that illiterate women can be effective group organizers. The question this project opens up is this: organize women for what? Too much focus on training in communication and group interaction could become an end in itself. Mahila Samakhya, a program to organize women for education, used the process of WDP but changed its aims and emphasis.

What emerges from the WDP experience is the *process* it unleashed: the organization, interaction, and participation of women.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AENFE:	Adult Education and Non-formal Education
DIU:	District Implementation Unit (Mahila Samakhya)
DRDPR:	Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
DRU:	District Resource Unit (Mahila Samakhya)
DRDA:	District Rural Development Agency
DWCRA:	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
DWDA:	District Women's Development Agency
HRD:	Human Resource Development
ICDS:	Integrated Child Development Services
IDARA:	Information Development and Resource Agency
IDS:	Institute of Development Studies
IRDP:	Integrated Rural Development Program
NAEP:	National Adult Education Program
NCSW:	National Commission for Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector
NGO:	Non-government Agency
PD:	Project Director
PO:	Project Officer
SITARA:	State Information, Training and Resource Agency (Mahila Samakhya)
TRYSEM:	Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund

INTRODUCTION

0.1 The importance of organizing women into groups lies in the collective strength women build which gives them access to and control of resources. These resources may be in the form of productive assets like land, credit, or machinery, or in the form of services like health care, education and extension services. Women's groups provide a forum to women for interaction, learning skills and discovering a commonality in their situation.

0.2 Women's development in India has up to now followed a social welfare approach in programs for women and children. Official documents from the 1980s, however, beginning with the Sixth Plan document, have set out intentions of involving women in the development process, but what had been overlooked was the need for receiving mechanisms among the disadvantaged groups. Group-formation thus is seen by this paper as an essential prerequisite for the reception and effective utilization of sectoral programs for women.

0.3 The Women's Development Program was begun in Rajasthan in 1984 in six districts and now extends over nine. It is presented here as a case study in awareness-building and group-formation among rural women. It represents a departure from the pattern of viewing women as welfare subjects, and has distinguished itself in terms of its premises, objectives and implementation.

0.4 WDP has established that the formation of groups is possible and can be repeated. It has led to the realization among rural women that their deprived condition is not unchangeable, that alternatives exist, that they have the competence to choose between alternatives and that they are not alone in the task. The question that WDP opens up is: organize women for what? Mahila Samakhya, a program to organize women for education has attempted to build upon the methodology of WDP with a shift in aims and emphasis. Thus, the relevant category which emerges in WDP is the process that it has unleashed -- of participation, interaction and organization of women.

0.5 This paper is divided into 10 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the program area - Rajasthan, and the status of women in the state. Chapter 2 presents the background and origins of WDP and the circumstances under which it came into existence. Chapter 3 delineates the organizational structure and administrative arrangements for the program. Chapter 4 discusses the role of training in WDP, and the innovations made in the training process. The formation of groups, and the process of extending the program to rural women is dealt with in Chapter 5. The system and concept of monitoring and evaluation in WDP are the focus for Chapter 6. Chapter 7 dwells on the impact of WDP on rural women, and the question of involving women in income generation activities. The structural and processual problems in the development of WDP, as well as management issues, and

NGO/government interaction form the core of the discussion in Chapter 8. Chapters 9 and 10 deal with financial arrangements for WDP and a new program for women's education, Mahila Samakhya, respectively.

CHAPTER I: THE RAJASTHAN CONTEXT

1.1 Rajasthan is an economically backward state in northwest India. Extending over an area of 342.4 thousand square kilometers, it has a population of 34.26 million. Eleven out of its twenty-seven districts are desert districts (situated in the Thar desert), five are pre-dominantly tribal and about fifteen are drought-prone. Chronic problems include desertification, scarce, unsafe drinking water, drought, and industrial backwardness.

1.2 Rajasthan is also notable for the low status of its female population. The female literacy rate in Rajasthan is 11.4 percent compared to the all-India figure of 24.4 percent (see annexure 2 for literacy figures for other states). Only 2.69 percent of the scheduled caste women and 1.2 percent of the scheduled tribe women are literate. In Jaipur district which contains the capital of Rajasthan, less than 1 percent of rural women are literate. Rajasthan's female literacy puts it among the six states of India having the lowest rate of female literacy (less than 20 percent). According to the conventional methods of computing work-participation, Rajasthan has a female work-participation rate of 21.06 percent. (For a district-wise breakdown of work-participation, literacy, and sex-ratio see annexures 4, 5, and 6, respectively.)

1.3 The reasons for the backwardness of women in Rajasthan are both cultural and economic. Rajasthan had been one of the strongholds of the feudal Rajput kings. As in other feudal, martial cultures, among the Rajputs too, the low position of women in society served to enhance the prestige of the warring clans. The current adverse sex-ratio of 1088 males to 1000 females in the state suggests that women's low status persists.

1.4 Women's development in Rajasthan was further hindered by the fact that Rajasthan was left mostly untouched by the movements for women's uplift, including education, widow remarriage and inheritance of property, which swept India in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the struggle for India's independence from British rule, women played a prominent role, but the movement in Rajasthan was not very vigorous, and women had little part in it. Finally, the geographical and topographical problems of the area serve to compound the low status of women in terms of accessibility to health-care and education and the availability of fuelwood, fodder, and water.

1.5 What Rajasthan does have to its credit are a number of non-government agencies working in remote, inaccessible areas. Also, there is a tradition of grass-root activism and self-help groups, organized by dynamic persons from within the community. In addition, the last two decades have seen the rise of several women's organizations involved in research, training, and field-

work. This combined with the fact that Rajasthan has a strong administrative ethos, has paved the way for innovation and experiment.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS OF WDP

2.1 WDP originated as a result of rigorous exercises undertaken by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj¹ (DRDPR) of the Government of Rajasthan (GOR) from 1982 to 1984, in response to difficulties encountered in implementation of the various development schemes. The DRDPR was charged with overseeing the Government of India's 20-Point Program, which included the various schemes such as emancipation of bonded labor, securing minimum wages for workers, primary education, child immunization, ecc. After reviewing available research, intensive field study, and interaction with voluntary agencies and social activists working in the field, the DRDPR reached the conclusion that in order for development programs to be successful, women must be given access to them through innovative means. The consensus was to launch a program which would create a new sense of worth among poor rural women and develop new fora of communication, and understanding about social and developmental issues.

2.2 The formal beginnings of WDP can be traced to May 1983 when the Development Commissioner initiated a brief conceptual paper on the proposed program. The paper was discussed by Secretaries and heads of departments in the state administration. While these officials had no objection to the program, neither were they enthusiastic about it. Also, they could not commit

funds for the program in view of the financial stringency in the state. However, the Development Commissioner had already had preliminary discussion with UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Welfare at the center regarding funding for the program. Apart from its clearance by the Rajasthan Chief Minister and the Minister in charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, the proposal does not seem to have been subject to discussion with the political leadership of the State.

2.3 In February 1984, UNICEF sponsored a two-day workshop in Udaipur, Rajasthan, to discuss the draft prepared by DRDPR. The workshop was attended by senior officials of the Central and State Government, leaders in the field of women's development from across the country, and representatives from UNICEF. The importance of the workshop lay in the fact that the various components of the Project document were discussed in detail, and suggestions made by the participants. It also set the tone for the participatory nature of the meetings for WDP.

The Project document

2.4 The WDP document was finalized by DRDPR within a month after the Udaipur workshop. The financial estimates were prepared in close consultation with the local UNICEF office. A brief Hindi version of the document was prepared and processed by the Government of Rajasthan, which gave its final approval in April 1984. The document was published in the following month.

2.5 The interesting thing about the preparation of the Project document is not its content, nor even the process which was followed for its development, but its declared provisionality and tentativeness. In fact, the earliest records of the meetings of WDP have statements by the Development Commissioner that he did not attach any sanctity to the project document, and that depending on experience, its parameters could be altered. The project document in fact remained essentially a guide to the structure and the financial patterns. Most other aspects of the project were altered as the implementation got underway. This included the shift of emphasis from concrete objectives of the program like employment and education to training and communication, a firm refusal to accept any quantitative targets and much wider role of non-government agencies.

2.6 The objectives of the program as set forth in the project document are both ambitious and ambiguous. The importance of the document for women's development strategy lies in the fact that it accepts and indeed stresses that no development is feasible without strong receiving mechanisms among disadvantaged groups, in this case, women. While other programs concentrate on strengthening delivery systems, the sole aim of WDP is to form groups which will consolidate themselves for their own development. It is implicit that these groups, once formed, will initiate the action which they need and decide upon. The policy document displays a basic faith in the potential of

women's groups and the "need to encourage and create agencies, groups and individuals to articulate concern towards indignities and discrimination against women...(and to)...empower women through communication of information, education and training and to enable them to recognize and improve their social and economic status" (GOR, 1984).

2.7 The second important element of the document is the degree of freedom visualized for women's groups and non-government organizations (NGOs). This is basically what sets WDP apart from other innovative government programs of women's development. Almost all government programs in women's development have stressed the need to build awareness and confidence among women, but before WDP there had never been a program that saw this as the paramount pre-requisite for integrating women into the development process.

CHAPTER III: THE ORGANIZATIONAL BASE

3.1 The management structure of WDP is an unusual amalgam of conventional departmental functioning along with direct and continuous involvement of local NGOs through an apex level Information Development and Resource Agency (IDARA) and an NGO assigned the responsibility for concurrent evaluation, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). In a somewhat unique manner WDP permitted the initiative for decision making to be taken over by women's organizations, rather than resting with the conventional administrative hierarchy. External funding (by UNICEF) has ensured that Government control mechanisms do not operate on a day to day basis, as they do in the case of ordinary Government schemes. The following chart will aid in the understanding of the various levels of organization and functions.

<u>LEVEL</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION/WORKER</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
STATE	Dept. of Women, Children and Nutrition	Overall coordination/ Administration
	State Information Development and Resource Agency (IDARA) - non-governmental	Information, training, staff selection, news-letter
	Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur - independent, non-governmental body	Monitoring, evaluation

DISTRICT	District Women's Development Agency	Administration
	District Information Development and Resource Agency	Information, training, district newsletter
FIELD	Pracheta	Block level worker - supervisor of 10 Sathins, trainer, liason person
SATHIN	One for 10 villages -	main field functionary organizer/ animator of groups

State Level

3.2 Originally WDP was intended to be a part of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (DRDPR). It was expected that a Joint Development Commissioner would be in charge of the program with some support staff. Over the years however, the administrative responsibility for WDP shifted to the Department of Social Welfare, most specifically to the Directorate of Women and Child Development (W C and N). The Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare is assisted by a Director of Women and Child Development, who in addition to WDP is also responsible for several other important schemes, including the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program. She is assisted by an Additional Director who is exclusively in charge of WDP. The person responsible for WDP has

generally been a female officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) with one exception. This position has been treated as a stepping stone for movement to another position for the IAS Officers. The Department of Social Welfare is responsible for staff recruitment, monitoring, selection of districts, and identification of a voluntary agency to serve as district Information Development and Resource Agency (IDARA).

3.3 There is also at the State level, the apex technical support agency or the State IDARA. The concept of an IDARA was based on the fact that a substantial portion of the work involved in group-formation is related to information needs of the group. Hence, appropriate learning material has to be created and made available in the popular idiom. Also, the dissemination of information has to be conducted with skill. The responsibility for IDARAs has been entrusted to voluntary agencies based in the area, working in the sphere of education and women's development. The State IDARA is the coordinator of the district IDARAs and its role is fulfilled by the Women's Studies wing of the Rajasthan Adult Education Association. The functions of the State IDARA are as follows:

- Training of district and block level staff
- Training district IDARA staff
- Contact with officials and non-officials dealing with women's issues

- Generating learning material for field staff
- Program evaluation

3.4 The third organization at the State level, is the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, (IDS), which was originally envisaged as evaluation agency, but has over the years been critically involved in the management of WDP. IDS is an institute for social science research with a strong component of field-work and grass-root activism. The additional strength of the IDS as well as the State IDARA rests in the fact that the persons heading the Women's Development wings of these organizations are uncommonly committed.

3.5 The Process of Decision-Making. Much of the decision making at the State level took place, at least during the first two years of the project through group meetings every 2-3 months which included senior officials of the State Government, women from the State and District IDARAs and IDS, and those involved with the training of WDP functionaries. In addition, there were some floating members - local officials, selected women working in the sphere of women's development in different parts of the country, etc. The group usually comprised 20-25 persons. The subjects discussed by the group included:

- Assessment of persons for appointment at the District level or in IDARAS
- Appraisal of training programs and identification

of training teams

- Discussion regarding spread of the program
- Resolution of interpersonal problems of WDP staff at the district level
- Advising district level WDP workers how to deal with District administration, which often put pressure on WDP workers to help achieve targets in programs such as family planning, the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), social forestry, etc.

3.6 The procedure followed for appointment of staff illustrates the role of the group meetings. At the start of WDP, DRDPR prepared special selection procedures for staff appointment. It was specified that persons working in Government of India or Rajasthan or any autonomous organization, Public Sector Undertakings or any NGO would be eligible for appointment in WDP. On appointment, the person concerned would be given distinct monetary benefit, fixed tenure, with a clear understanding that if her work was not satisfactory she would be asked to resign at short notice. A special Selection Committee was also constituted.

3.7 The selection procedure actually followed was different. A large number of persons with awareness and understanding of women's issues were consulted to identify women who could be appointed to the DWDAs. These persons, as well as

the NGOs which were commissioned to run the district level IDARAs were asked to suggest names of persons who could be appointed to the IDARAs. The suggestions received were first screened in an informal manner by Government officials, IDS and head of the State IDARA. The persons so shortlisted were invited to one of the group meetings mentioned above. In the course of the meeting, which generally lasted 3 days, the suitability of the candidates was assessed. Generally, one out of three or four persons invited to group meetings clearly emerged as the best candidate. Since at the initial stages the Development Commissioner, and later the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare or the Director in charge of WDP were present in the meeting, they held informal consultations with colleagues in IDARAs and IDS, and for all practical purposes, made the selection. The State Government observed the technicality of advertising for the post and holding a meeting of the Selection Committee, but the selections in reality were made in the group meeting. The newly selected staff was invited to all subsequent group meetings, which served as the principal method for their training and professional development. The purpose of this rather lengthy description of the initial procedures was to illustrate how the management of WDP from the beginning established the ideas of flexible procedures, intensive discussion, and the importance of committed personnel.

District Level

3.8 Each WDP district has a District Women's Development Agency (DWDA). DWDA is an autonomous body (registered society under the Societies Registration Act) with financial and administrative powers. The District Collector² is the Chairman of the DWDA and its membership comprises a few officials, and some women who may be researchers or social activists. The guidelines issued by the State Government also specify representation of the District IDARA and a few block and village level WDP workers on the DWDA. The Member-Secretary of DWDA is the District Project Director (PD).

3.9 The Project Director is a key functionary in WDP. Her selection is made under special selection rules, and through group meetings. Of the PD's selected so far, all have been women. As regards their occupations prior to recruitment, two were lecturers in Government colleges, two were lecturers in non-government colleges, one was a medical doctor, one was an official of the State School Education Department, and one had worked in the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) on its women's development activities.

3.10 Although the WDP document specified that the State Government would provide Project Officers (POs) as assistants to PDs, this has not occurred. In the few places where POs were

appointed, they found it difficult to work as a team with PDs, due to inter-personal problems and the lack of clarity in the job-responsibility of the POs.

3.11 The PD is the Chief Coordinator of the program and the project document anticipates that she will "have to work with tact and firmness with the Panchayati Raj, bodies, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), various government departments, district IDARA and other voluntary agencies." She has a vehicle and office assistants at her disposal as part of her official infrastructure. The main function of the PD as set forth in the document are as follows.

- To assist in the selection of the block level WDP functionaries (Prachetas);
- To supervise the work of the Prachetas directly and to the extent possible that of the village level workers (Sathins);
- To convene meetings of the DWDA and its committees and to carry out their decisions;
- To work closely with the district IDARA and to establish a relationship of partnership with it;
- To attend meetings of Zila Parishads³ and Panchayat Samitis⁴ in order to extend WDP and secure their cooperation in its implementation;
- To establish an informal and collaborative relationship with the various departments of the

government and other agencies, which can help in the WDP;

- To efficiently run the district project office;
- To periodically monitor the implementation of the WDP and the extent to which the benefits of various schemes accrue to women.

3.12 The other component of WDP at the District level is the District IDARA. Four of the NGOs functioning as IDARAs have experience in adult education, one works in college teacher education, and one in the popularization of science. Banswara district does not have an IDARA. Each IDARA has two professionals and supporting staff. The functions of the district IDARA are as follows:

- Training of Sathins (village level WDP workers),
- Refresher courses for Sathins once a quarter,
- Participation in Sathin meetings,
- Publication of monthly newsletter - "Sathin Ro Kagad",
- Dissemination of information about schemes and programs relevant to women,
- Making printed and audio-visual support materials available to Sathins.

3.13 The district level management system combines elements from the administrative system created for the implementation of various rural development programs like the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) and the technical resource support system envisaged under the National Adult Education Program (NAEP)⁵. As a part of the rural development administration, each district has a District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) under the Chairmanship of District Collector with a Project Director as Member-Secretary. The NAEP envisages a State Resource Center for training and production of teaching/learning materials with district resource units mainly for training of adult education workers. The organizational structure and the decision-making procedures described above illustrate the attempt made to involve NGOs at every level in the conception and development of WDP.

Field Level

3.14 The field level of WDP has clusters of village level workers called Sathin (literally, comrade or friend) with one Pracheta (literally animator or initiator) as supervisor of ten Sathins.

Sathins

3.15 The original expectation was that a few Prachetas would initially be appointed and trained, and then asked to help in

selection of Sathins. In reality, however, selection of Sathins and Prachetas took place simultaneously. Hence, most of the clusters are not in compact and contiguous areas, but rather, are the result of the chance visit of the selection team to a particular village.

3.16 An account of how Sathins were originally selected will perhaps illustrate the process. In July 1984, the Development Commissioner asked some persons from Rajasthan Adult Education Association, (which was identified as the institution to serve as State IDARA), some local NGO staff, and a few selected officials of State Education Department to visit some villages of Jaipur district. Since the date for training of Sathins had been fixed, the teams had to make the selection in a short time. Therefore, they restricted their visits to villages well connected by roads to select Sathins. Out of 32 Sathins so selected, 24 came for training, which was hastily organized with the help of an able trainer (a non-government person). In the first training session, none of the women were found to be fit to work as Sathins. Subsequently, selection of Sathins was made by PDs with the help of the staff of the Block Development Office. Nevertheless, after almost all training programs for Sathins, two or three Sathins were considered unsuitable and were not given appointment orders.

3.17 The criteria for the selection of a Sathin are:

- preferably a woman from the lowest socio-economic strata,
- a woman with the support of her own community,
- a woman with empathy for the condition of village women and flexible ideas.
- a woman for whom monetary gain is not be the only motivation.

3.18 The Sathins are today a heterogenous group of about 550 women from different castes, educational levels, economic groups, marital statuses and age-groups. There can only be one Sathin in a Gram Panchayat⁶. Therefore, there is on an average, one Sathin to a population of 5000 persons, (or 4 villages), in each WDP district.

3.19 A Sathin who completes training is given a formal appointment on a monthly remuneration of Rs.200. In the course of her training, a Sathin is given a sense of worth, self confidence and capacity to communicate. She begins to understand that she has to play a leadership role in enabling the women of her village and perhaps few surrounding villages to understand their predicament and to move towards securing a better status for themselves. Some basic information is given to Sathins

during training regarding laws relating to women's work, marital and social issues, women's physiology and hygiene, selected Government programs, etc. A Sathin is expected to organize a women's group in her village, and is the core link in the program.

3.20 The WDP document sets forth certain directions for Sathins. She is to "begin her work on a low keyfamiliarize herself with the village institutions.....and the people working in them.....establish rapport with some village women...". Essentially, the functions of the Sathin include:

- initiating discussion on the problems of the women
- reporting to the Pracheta and the DWDA the problems of women and the possible solutions, including giving feedback to them about development programs
- sharing information about development programs and laws
- organizing action on issues of concern for the women in consultation with the DWDA and the Pracheta
- reading out and initiating discussion on the Sathin Ro Kagad
- preparing reports of her activities either in writing or pictorially

Prachetas

3.21 Prachetas are selected by a committee headed by the District Collector, whose members include the PD and representatives of the District IDARA and the State WDP Director. In most cases, the District Collector tends to leave the decision to the other members of the Committee. Prachetas have mostly been selected from amongst school teachers, although a fair number have come from women village level workers and some from amongst rural nurses and NGO staff. The training of Prachetas has received special attention and after each training, a few Prachetas are found to be unsuitable and do not get confirmed. Prachetas receive regular salary - a small increase is made over the salary they were drawing before their selection as Pracheta.

3.22 The project document calls the Pracheta the "principal animator" of the program. The functions of the Pracheta are:

- Sathin selection and training,
- helping Sathins in planning meetings, assessing the needs of women's groups, and action to be initiated on various issues,
- functioning as a link between the Sathins and the District level WDP structure, through the translation of Sathin reports, preparation of cluster-level reports and the communication of these to the DWDA and district IDARA,
- assisting Sathins in the organization of

Sathin meetings (jajams), and attending as many village meetings as possible,

- functioning as a link between Sathins and the block development office,
- keeping the DWDA informed about the coverage of women in development programs,
- disbursing salaries of Sathins and other materials made available through the district IDARA and DWDA.

3.23 Prachetas normally have a B.A. degree and may be residents of a village or of the block headquarters. The main criteria for Pracheta selection are:

- ability to communicate both with the village women as well as the government officials and the district WDP structure,
- ability to shed hierarchical notions so that there is no boss-subordinate relationship between them and Sathins,
- ability to delink themselves from their middle class values,
- flexibility in attitudes.

CHAPTER IV: THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN WDP

4.1 If there is one way of describing the "methodology" involved in the growth of WDP, it is "training". The concept of training in WDP is seen in the broadest sense, as an exercise that generates experiences which alter women's perception of themselves and society's image of them. This is in contrast to schemes like the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and Training of Rural Youth in self employment (TRYSEM)⁷ where training is envisaged as an exercise in skill endowment.

4.2 Typically, training for Sathins or Prachetas is an intense 20-25 day get-together. It is held in an atmosphere charged with tension and emotion that leads to a catharsis in the final stages. Far from being lectures on cleanliness, nutrition and child-care, the training sessions "experiment with the possibility of creating a climate of questioning, reflecting, sharing, choosing, seeking and discovering" (IDS and IDARA, 1986, pg.13). The topics for discussion and brainstorming include drought, environment, health, water, crimes against women, laws relating to women, and women's inequality in all its forms. An attempt is made by the trainers to bring out women's views on these issues and to get them to ask questions.

4.3 The objectives of those charged with training the Sathins and Prachetas are essentially to:

- (a) inculcate among the trainees the values upheld by WDP of the importance of groups, participation in all activities, the dignity of women and lack of hierarchy; (b) inform the trainees about government programs and the benefits available to women through them;
- (c) explain the functioning of the government, especially at the field level, along with some rules and procedures. Practical training is given on interacting with government functionaries at the block level;
- (d) impart basic information about laws relating to women, how to file a criminal case with the police, minimum wage and drought-relief legislation, available legal services, importance of the thumb impression etc.;
- (e) draw out from the trainees their perception of the role of women in society, and to question that internalized self-image, as also attempt to build an image of a "new woman";
- (f) facilitate interaction among women from different castes and economic groups, build team spirit through everyday activities like cooking, cleaning the premises, and more structured group-activity;

(g) train women in seeking information, and public speaking;

(h) encourage feedback about the training and any other aspect of the program;

(i) inform women about the struggles of women in different parts of the country and the world so as to build a sense of solidarity with women in similar situations and seek commonality of purpose;

(j) demonstrate the document activity either in writing or pictorially, in order to facilitate the writing of Sathin and Pracheta reports.

4.4 Each training slowly grows from a generalized to a personalized experience, as the social distance between trainers and trainees disappears in a riot of song, dance, mime, skits, games and art. One of the significant processes in the course of the development of WDP has been the increasing sophistication of techniques of communication with rural women. Very effective use is made of the folk idiom, art forms, songs, parody, satire and dance. Other training aids used are books, and visual aids like flash cards, three-dimensional models, drawings, and cartoons⁸.

4.5 In an important sense, WDP has evolved through training, although the term in a strict sense implies the induction of Sathins and Prachetas into the program. It also

serves many other WDP objectives. The training process facilitates the formation of the first group which encompasses the IDARAS, DWDA, IDS, Sathins and Prachetas. It is, thus a first step in the process of group formation. The other objectives fulfilled by the training process are :

1. Staff selection: While in theory Sathins and Prachetas are selected through interviews, in actual fact, it is assessment of their performance in training programs which confirms their selection.
2. Project evaluation: As mentioned elsewhere, the monitoring and evaluation of the program is done through the training programs where the IDARAS, IDS, DWDA and the Department of WC and N express their views which are then recorded in the training reports. It is also a system of two way feedback whereby the efficacy of the processes initiated by Sathins, Prachetas, IDARAS, DWDA are all discussed and thought over.
3. Revision: The intense feedback mechanism developed in the training and the flexibility of the management to adopt new suggestions has made training programs central to the process of reorientation of WDP. There are no set models, guidelines or targets and changes are wrought as required for a particular group, area or problem.

4. Reinforcement for non-hierarchical structures:

The training programs with their emphasis on community living and personal interaction have served as arenas to reinforce the central aspect of WDP organizational structure: the absence of hierarchy. Sometimes, the roles of trainers and trainees are reversed as the urban women from IDARA or IDS are transformed into learners about the customs and perceptions of village women. Moreover, they are not always the ones who control this process of learning.

5. Generation of new leadership: Each training program throws up a host of new "trainers", and as WDP management realizes that there can be no "highly skilled trainer". From amongst Prachetas, almost 80 percent have evolved skills in training, as have Sathins. This has led to effective decentralization of training.

4.6 It is the training component in WDP which is its greatest strength and also the point that needs greatest consideration in any attempt to replicate the program. WDP training presupposes a degree of commitment among trainers, an ability to identify with village women's problems, a willingness to learn, a flexibility of approach and an involvement in the initial concept of the program that is hard to achieve.

4.7 Another aspect which needs to be brought out in assessing WDP training is the increasing preoccupation of the management with training. Without undervaluing the importance of training in women's development, it must be understood that training is a means to achieve an end. With WDP, training and re-training has achieved the end of altering the self-perception of a group of 500-600 Sathins and Prachetas, but as we shall discuss later, the management has to look beyond the training --> catharsis --> confidence cycle and work towards channelizing the energies released in the course of training.

CHAPTER V: THE WORKING OF WOMEN'S GROUPS

5.1 The Project document refers to Mahila Vikas Kendra (MVK) literally Women's Development Center as the focal point of WDP at the village level. Originally it was envisaged that a small building of approximately 400 sq. ft. (see annexure for proposed plan) would be constructed for each MVK. An MVK was visualized as a continuing education center for women, as well as place for organizing simple training programs. During the last 4-5 years, MVK buildings have come up at several places, but the institutional perspective of a place or center, has given way to the concept of an informal network of women's groups. Only a few MVK buildings could be built and the task of organizing groups seemed much more relevant to the leaders of WDP that women's groups should be formed, than paying too much attention to establishment of a MVK.

5.2 The central issue in a program aimed at the formation of women's groups is: how does the program reach the mass of rural women? Whereas in the initial stages no firm structures for the formation of groups were envisaged, as the program has developed there have emerged three types of women's groups at the village level. The first is the monthly meeting of the Sathins of the district, called Jajam. The second is the informal women's group organized by the Sathin in the village. The third are the emerging, more structured fora for interaction. A

distinct platform for information-sharing and interaction which brings together the staff of WDP, known as the "shivir" and the WDP newsletter - Sathin Ro Kagad, will also be discussed in this section.

The Jajam

5.3 A jajam is a monthly meeting of the Sathins, organized by them and is the forum for learning, communication and sharing of experiences. It is place where women can bring their problems, social or individual and seek solutions and help. It is also a place for singing, dancing, gossip and information dissemination. The word "Jajam" literally means a thick woven cloth to be spread on the floor and it is interesting and significant that the word is perhaps derived from the traditional practice during mourning where the village would rally in sympathy round the bereaved family, sit on a jajam and express solidarity and offer help.

5.4 There is no definite format for a jajam, but the basic steps in the process are:

- fixing date, time and place which could be the school building, panchayat house, anganwadi⁹,
- sending the message through word of mouth, through school children or a bus conductor to women of the neighboring village,

- identification of issues to be discussed,
- requisitioning information on the subject from the district IDARA,
- sharing experiences at the meeting as well as perceptions, eliciting questions, explanation of the issue,
- discussion and information sharing,
- seeking solutions,
- planning action.

5.5 The major issues discussed at jajams depend on the particular problems of the area. In the last 3-4 years Rajasthan has been hit by recurrent drought, and so, the most commonly debated issue at the jajams has been drought relief works, and the access of women to them. Other development problems discussed have been: accessibility of water, health, pensions, disbursement of loans and subsidies, fodder, fuelwood, and corruption. Social issues like rape, child marriage, dowry, desertion, the status of widows and a range of legal issues are also featured.

5.6 A major portion of the time of jajams is devoted to the discussion of individual issues as they affect the lives of particular women. The Sathins rally round the wronged woman and systematically plan action to seek redress.

5.7 The jajam emerges in WDP as an important mechanism for feedback not only about WDP but also the other development programs. Jajam meetings are often attended by DWDA and IDARA staff and help in planning for the future. It is also a forum for the retraining of Sathins as well as the Prachetas who attend the jajams. The attendance of IDS staff in jajams assists IDS in the task of evaluation.

Informal groups at the village level

5.8 At another level, the Sathin of a village organizes meetings of groups of women. These meetings are held at any available space, from the Panchayat Ghar, a school, out in the open, the anganwadi, or even at the Sathin's house. The meetings are usually not held at regular intervals but depend on specific issues that affect the lives of women, or some information that needs to be shared.

5.9 The informal women's group has now become the principal instrumentality of WDP at the village level. The women's group comprises 8-10 regular and active members with a large number of floating participants, depending on how much the issue currently in discussion affects them. The regular members may be close associates of the Sathin and may even belong to her caste. In a typical village, meetings of the women's groups take place twice a month. The subject of discussion includes, in practically every meeting, some topical issues relating to the village women,

some discussion on legal, political and developmental issues as well as sharing of the Sathin Ro Kagad, the monthly newsletter. In an average WDP village, nearly one-third of the women of the village would come in contact with the Sathin through the women's groups once in every few months. The activities of the group are reported in a jajam.

5.10 Once the group has solidified in the sense of having had some formal sittings and a few group actions, women begin to discuss their problems in a much more self-conscious and aware manner at their usual places of congregation like the hand-pump, well or bathing spot. The consciousness of certain issues as concerning the women of a village as a whole, and the idea that something can be done and help sought, is the strongest evidence that WDP has achieved much in the area of confidence building.

5.11 Although it is impossible to get an idea of the numbers of groups and women participating in them, since they are so informal, the important point is that in times of crisis or during the period of group action, many more women appear. They also know that the group is a sympathetic one and the Sathin has the support of the district administration and access to it. The group therefore is not a fixed entity built around one issue. More likely, it is built around the Sathin. Its main function is

information sharing and solidarity building, leading to a generation of energy and confidence which can be effectively utilized for economically more productive ventures.

5.12 The issues raised in the women's meetings are much the same as those raised in the jajams, or more precisely, the jajams reflect the concerns voiced in the informal meetings and are a point for feedback about those concerns.

5.13 What are the problems encountered by Sathins in setting up groups or in holding meetings?

- (a) women cannot leave their homes during the day, leaving domestic chores and children unattended,
- (b) women joining group action makes the men in the family uncomfortable,
- (c) wage workers cannot come to day-long meetings as they would have to forego a day's earnings. Women who work as unpaid family laborers on their own farms are also reluctant to miss a day's work. Hence, attendance of both wage workers and small farm women during harvest is low.
- (d) the caste of the Sathin often determines the attendance, especially if she is a lower caste women,
- (f) festivals and weddings too compete with jajams for women's scarce time at certain auspicious times of

the year,

- (g) in cases of individual distress like sexual harassment, the husband of the woman, and other men in her family normally give in to the dominant elements (who are often also the perpetrators) and pressurize the women to give up action.

5.14 One of the ways to bridge the above problems is to have not one group but several. The Sathin succeeds in making contact with maximum women because of the fact that the meetings are unstructured and informal. She weaves her activities around specific issues of concern.

Other Emerging Fora for Interaction at the Village Level

(1) Bal-Vivah Goshti or Child Marriage Forum: Rajasthan has a notorious tradition of child marriage where, on a particularly auspicious day young girl children are married en masse to men much older than them. A concerted effort has been made by WDP to generate awareness about the issue and build opinion against it. The meetings of these "goshtis" are usually explosive affairs with the women rallying vociferously against the village power structures and dominant elements. The group actions initiated so far have all met with failure, but have succeeded in building a climate of dissent among women against the social evil.

(2) 8th March Celebration: The International Women's Day Celebrations bring together women of two to three villages in day

long or overnight celebrations, where problems relating to women of that area are discussed. These are recorded in the newsletter which is then circulated to all Sathin villages.

The Shivir:

5.15 Another important formal forum for interaction and education in WDP is the shivir, literally meaning "camp". It is in fact an intensive three-day camp experience, built around a particular issue of concern. A typical shivir has as its participants all Sathins and Prachetas of the district, women of the village where it is held, DWDA, IDARA, relevant government officials and some resource persons who give information about the subject. The shivir is the result of thorough planning over a period of several months. The post-shivir meetings are equally intensive and reflective. To date, 13 shivirs have been held, of which four have been on famine¹⁰, five on health and traditional medicine and the remaining on elections, legal issues and government programs. (See annexure 7 for details of the Jaipur shivir)

5.16 In short, a shivir is an interactional process whereby a problem is identified, understood, discussed and information made available to Sathins and Prachetas for dissemination. What is relevant is how information is internalized by village level workers. WDP does not force information on the women, but instead creates a process by which they spontaneously seek it.

The shivir creates an atmosphere where the focus is on interaction. The steps involved in planning a shivir shows how:

- (a) group spirit is reinforced.
- (b) hierarchical structures are set aside.
- (c) government and NGOs interact.
- (d) communication systems evolve in the relevant idiom.
- (e) information needs are identified and responded to through a bottom-up rather than a blue-print approach.

5.17 The evaluation of a shivir is an important activity aimed at getting feed-back from Sathins and Prachetas and reorienting the pattern of future shivirs. The functions fulfilled by a shivir as reported by Sathins and Prachetas after a shivir in Jaipur in 1986 on the local self-governing institutions (Panchayati Raj) emerged as:

- (i) knowledge acquisition and thereby a feeling and confidence.
- (ii) realization that the group had no consciousness about punctuality!
- (iii) sense of solidarity in the group.

5.18 It is obvious that organizing a shivir requires massive inputs in terms of time, resources and energy. This is probably the reason why they are infrequent. To transcend this

problem, the concept large scale shivirs gave way to that of mini-shivirs. In an effort to involve more women in shivirs, Sathins are asked to bring along two or three of their close associates (Sahelis). This increases the number of participants considerably, making it more representative, but also logistically problematic. Mini-shivirs were begun in July 1987 in Jaipur district to bring together half the WDP clusters in the district at one time. So far, 5 mini-shivirs have been held in Jaipur and 4 in Udaipur district. Most of these have related to famine and health.

The Newsletter: Sathin Ro Kagad

5.19 In an attempt at establishing links between WDP villages, two monthly newsletters are brought out, both called Sathin Ro Kagad - one by the State IDARA and the other by the district IDARA. Sathin Ro Kagad (literally Sathin's paper) is based on letters from Sathins and village women which are received by the IDARAs (numbering 50-60 per month) and on the reports of jajams, shivirs, workshops and other activities. Mostly, they focus on a particular issue like alcoholism, famine works, water, and fair-price shops. The two most important themes have been famine and water. The newsletters contain sketches, poems, songs by women and are written in simple, Hindi, using Rajasthani idioms. The IDARA appeals to women to communicate with Sathin Ro Kagad, send information about events, problems and to give feedback. Often the newsletter closes with

a question or problem about which readers' views are elicited.

5.20 The "kagad" is read out by the Sathin to women of her village and discussion initiated on its contents. It brings something of the outside world into the lives of women in the village and builds a sense of oneness and solidarity among them. Meetings called to discuss Sathin Ro Kagad reveal that the problems they face are not unique or isolated.

CHAPTER VI: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 In India the system of evaluation and monitoring often determines the nature of the program. Monitoring of practically all Government programs is based on quantitative data with reference to particular periods, monthly or quarterly. There is heavy reliance on the figures furnished from the Block to the District and then to the State and National levels. This emphasis on rigorous quantitative monitoring often leads to insufficient concern with the qualitative aspects of the program implementation. Also, the reliability of the data furnished from the block can be questionable, since block level functionaries are under constant pressure to meet targets. This is being increasingly brought to the notice of policy implementors, who in recent years, are hiring outside evaluation agencies and institutes of social science research to undertake objective appraisals of various programs. Yet, in neither monitoring nor in most outside evaluation efforts are there effective mechanisms for feedback and program improvement.

6.2 Little attention seems to have been paid to monitoring and evaluation at the time of formulation of WDP document. All it says is that the State IDARA, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, (IDS) and the Centers of Women's Development Studies in the universities will be involved to build up a system

of evaluation from the second year of the program. A small amount (Rs.150,000) is provided for this purpose in the annual budget.

6.3 IDS was involved with WDP from the time of its inception. IDS workers associated themselves with WDP as trainers as well as learners in the first training (August 1984). There has been hardly a single Pracheta or Sathin training program - organized without some participation of IDS personnel. IDS staff were also conspicuously present in the group meetings which took place for program review and staff selection and served on the Steering Committee and most of the Selection Committees for Prachetas. In other words, IDS became an integral part of the management as well as technical resource support system for WDP. The Institute used its involvement to give a new dimension to program evaluation. Detailed analysis of how IDS did this is beyond the scope of this paper, but its role can be understood to a large degree through the following examples.

6.4 Appraisal of training programs: Almost every training program has been documented by IDS. Generally training programs are followed by a stock taking of methods employed, effectiveness of trainers, training arrangements and outcomes. In response to a request from IDS, two of the main persons responsible for the early training sessions - Aruna Roy and

Sushmita Banerjee - prepared excellent documentation of these sessions.

6.5 Personal contact. IDS workers have succeeded in maintaining personal contact with PDs in every district, with the State and District IDARAs and with many Prachetas and Sathins. IDS activists go and spend several days with Sathins to assist them with their work and keep detailed notes on how Sathins work, particularly in group formation. These field visits also enable IDS to concretise the process of evaluation. A large number of letters are received in IDS from the field level, which includes village women who participate in village level groups. Practically all the letters are attended to and answered.

6.6 Jajam and Shivar. As mentioned earlier, a woman from IDS attends Shivirs and Jajams. These fora are a means of continuing education of Prachetas and Sathins as well as instrumentalities for program evaluation. Detailed accounts of every Shivar and Jajam are recorded by the IDS staff attending it, and the reports are sometimes discussed in a group in which the WDP Director and the women from the State IDARA also participate.

6.7 Actual evaluation work: UNICEF and the State Government have expected WDP to furnish regular evaluation reports. IDS has played a major role in this. Its publication

Exploring Possibilities is a good illustration of the approach adopted by IDS in regard to evaluation:

For a consensus on 'What is the overall picture', a series of evaluation meetings and workshops have again been conducted at the district and State level. The groups have critically looked at their own processes and occasionally it has meant the spending of enormous energy over issues which might appear trivial to an 'outsider'. However, the assumption underlying this process has been to simultaneously correct the drifts and not just observe, record and report them. If rural women really need assistance to shake off their subordination and suffering, the processes of evaluation have to be simultaneously seen as processes for strengthening the activity. Again, if it is correct to assume that improvements in the human situation are possible not by ordering change but only through an internalization of change, the evaluation activity acquires an added responsibility for sharing of information and consolidated knowledge. Both these points have been taken as serious principles of direction in this evaluation study." (IDS and IDARA, 1986 Pg. 11)

6.8 In WDP, a distinct understanding of evaluation has begun to emerge. There are a number of significant ways in which it differs from the kind of evaluation that is carried out in most programs. First, evaluation is not treated as external to the implementation process. Rather, it is viewed as part of a process which begins with training and moves to action --> reflection --> retraining (or reorientation) --> action.... and so on. Second, evaluation and the people connected with it, rather than being a threat, are accepted as a part of the support system. Hence, it follows that, the traditional notion of objective 'external' evaluation is discarded in favor of participatory, committed evaluation. This means that, evaluation

in WDP is not for outsiders (for example, the State Government, the funding agency, women's studies, scholars, etc.) but is meant primarily for WDP workers and for program improvement.

6.9 Output monitoring is almost completely lacking in WDP. The program does indeed have financial monitoring and accounts are maintained systematically and are furnished periodically to UNICEF and the Department of W C and N, and the spread of the program is carefully monitored. But there is practically no quantitative monitoring of the work done by Prachetas and Sathins. No proformae have been prescribed, nor targets laid down. The result is that neither the State Government, nor IDS, nor UNICEF have precise quantified data, with reference to a particular period of time, to indicate specific activities undertaken in the field. What PDs, State IDARA, IDS and the State Government do have are interesting illustrations of the kind of work which Prachetas and Sathins have done, the kind of processes they have set in motion -- episodes which illustrate the manner in which bondage of women can be loosened and they can face in unison suppression within family, the neglect by the developmental agencies, and the oppression of the police and the criminal elements.

6.10 Recently the Directorate of WC and N has circulated proformae on the basis of which types of group actions and the numbers should be recorded on a quarterly basis. Also, the

question of external evaluation is being seriously considered by the Directorate. A report has also been published which reviews the organizational structure of WDP on the basis of the study of a sub-committee from the Department of Women, Ministry and Human Resources Development (HRD), Government of India.

CHAPTER VII: THE IMPACT OF WDP

7.1 The impact of WDP on rural women can be assessed most reliably through a field visits and conversations with the women. The sub-committee of the Ministry of HRD mentioned earlier concluded after attending a jajam, that the "women of the village definitely feel that the Sathin gives them support in all the critical areas of their life, both at home and in the work place.....(and that) WDP provides a feeling of solidarity to all women, particularly to the abandoned and destitute women.....". The aversion of the management to quantifiable targets and the inadequate documentation of the efforts at the field level, makes it difficult to point out the impact in figures. However, an attempt has been made to piece together references to the achievements of WDP in the context of the development programs of the government.

Development Programs

7.2 The main achievement of WDP has been the generation of awareness about the programs and benefits available to women. There is now a place and forum where women can go to enquire about a program without the hesitation they experience in doing the same through the Block Development Office. Sathins and Pracheta also facilitate the acquisition of "bureaucratic know-how" by women. Lack of knowledge about rules and procedures, how to "work the system", and the stigma attached to interacting with

male functionaries to get access to services, is a serious drawback in women's participation in the development programs. WDP, by building a cadre of female field-level functionaries having links at the district level has secured women access to the services they need.

7.3 The National Commission for Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector (NCSW), during its tour of WDP districts,

"observed a marked difference in the agricultural workers' attitudes in villages where WDP's work has been going on. All the women there knew about the benefits of extension services for improved methods in agriculture, about minimum wages for labor, and about acquiring loans. In Udaipur district, women were aware of and agitating about the zinc pollution.....which is destroying their crops and their health.... (Women in WDP districts) were much clearer about setting their priorities and making their demands....."

(NCSW, 1988, pg.vii).

7.4 In Banswara, 50 women have taken advantage of the government's program of giving milch cattle, including Jersey cows, and for the first time in the State, 7 women have come forward as candidates for training by the Indian Technical Institutes (ITI) as hand-pump mechanics. Smokeless chulhas (stoves) which substantially reduce the fuelwood needs, and awareness of the ill-effects on health of traditional stoves have been popularized by Sathins in all WDP districts. Udaipur and Banswara are the districts severely infested by guinea-worm. The State runs an active program for its eradication. WDP realized that since women are the fetchers of water, their education is

most important, and organized awareness camps in the villages about the problem.

7.5 Small savings too have been given a boost among women in WDP districts. Under the government's small savings drive, 50 women in Banswara formed an association called the Indra Mahila Vikas Samiti and have deposited Rs. 15,721,40. They lend this money out to their members at very low rates of interest to start new economic activities. Sathins and Prachetas have been active in helping women to open small savings accounts. In Lotiyana village in Ajmer, men and women have sought the help of WDP to start a mini-bank.

7.6 Environmental education and its implications for fodder, droughts and desertification has been another area where WDP has concentrated its efforts. In Bhilwara and Banswara women have set up plant nurseries and planted saplings. 150,000 plants are nurtured by groups of women. In Jodhpur, the women of Salawas village agitated against the health hazards and water pollution caused by the neighboring factories. The Collector was forced to take notice of the problem and promise to install purifier plants in the industries.

7.7 An issue of concern to all women is that of clean, accessible drinking water. In Ajmer district (Datan village) a women's group was organized to ensure that a hand-pump was

installed in a lower caste (Gujjar) neighborhood, in the face of opposition from upper caste persons who wanted it added to their area. Women from lower castes experience hostility from higher castes when they fill water from hand-pumps in the latter's neighborhood. There are innumerable cases of women petitioning to the Collector to install or repair hand-pumps in their area and tenaciously pursuing their demand until it is met. In many cases the hand-pump had been approved for the area but never installed. In other cases, hand-pumps were out of order. The successes of women in this sphere has had positive demonstration effect for women in neighboring areas, who have been motivated to pursue similar goals.

Relationship with other development schemes

7.8 Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), is a program under the Seventh Plan, which is aimed at group-formation for economic activities. There has been some discussion about the dovetailing of WDP and DWCRA. A convergence of WDP, DWCRA and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) had been attempted on an experimental basis in Bhilwara district with encouraging results. The sub-committee of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women) which reported on the functioning of WDP observed that Anganwadi workers (in charge of the Anganwadi -- the distribution point for food supplements, immunization, and monitoring of children's health at the village level, under ICDS) and Gram-Sevikas

(facilitators for formation of groups under DWCRA) are invited and regularly attend the Sathin's meetings. The Sathin plays an active role in formation of DWCRA groups. Three training centers of DWCRA, and one Anganwadi are functioning in the Mahila Vikas Kendras (MVKs) of WDP. Fifteen Sathins run adult and non-formal education centers.

7.9 In an illustrative case in Suwana village in Bhilwara, 12 women including the Sathin took training in handloom weaving under DWCRA. They bought the loom, raw materials and initiated the marketing on their own, since they found the Panchayat Samiti and the DRDA rigid and unhelpful. Although weaving has not yet become their primary source of income, these women now earn an average of Rs 9 to 10 per day.

7.10 In Jodhpur district, WDP groups process and supply food supplements to the ICDS centers. Also, 44 Sathins are working as instructors in the adult education programs.

7.11 Chakraverti (1988), in a comparative assessment of WDP and DWCRA, actually suggests a substitution of DWCRA with a program like WDP with one major addition to the focus -- that of facilitating income-generating schemes through WDP functionaries. Her projected costs per block for WDP (Rs.93,000) are substantially lower than those for DWCRA (Rs.180,000+). Also, WDP has done much better in reaching poor and lower caste women

than DWCRA. The training component for the Sathins and Prachetas is more intensive and they are better prepared to form groups than are the Gram Sevikas under DWCRA.

Health

7.12 The issue of women's health has been a subject of discussion by women's groups in various fora, training programs and meetings. In response to this need for information, a survey was conducted among the women of Ajmer district of the prevailing health problems of women. This was followed by a Shivir on health in Ajmer in February 1986. In view of the success of the Shivir and the need for information, a comprehensive project for health education was launched in Ajmer, Jaipur and Jodhpur.

7.13 The health project focussed specifically on the general health of women, as against only her well-being during childbirth. It also took notice of special problems of women like sterility, the reality of widows being subject to sexual relations with males in her husband's family and the question of access of such women to contraceptives.

7.14 The first step was to bring out a simple book on the anatomy and physiology of women. Its contents were shared with women through female school teachers, at famine relief sites, and through the primary health center. This was followed by intensive discussion and feedback from Sathins and Prachetas as

to its reception in the village. Extensive use of three-dimensional models and visual aids was made. The next step was the publishing of the second book on pregnancy and sterilization respectively. These were received with much greater enthusiasm as much due to the subject matter as better skills in transmitting the information.

7.15 The results of the health project were that many more infertile couples sought treatment. The number of pregnant women taking the tetanus toxoid injection increased, some pregnant women began to eat traditionally forbidden food like yogurt and buttermilk, some women with chronic backaches and vaginal discharge sought treatment, of which two were found to have cancer of the cervix. The women staff of the rural health care system got directly involved with WDP, through information dissemination, invitation to meetings and personal contacts of the Sathins.

WDP and Drought Relief Activities

7.16 There has been recurrent drought in Rajasthan since 1983, and "more famine relief works" is the unanimous demand of women in the rural areas. The women report widespread discrimination and harassment on drought relief work sites. WDP responded to the needs of village women for more information about drought, rules and regulations about relief employment, and the avenues for redress available to them. Of the 13 Shivirs

held from 1986 to 1988, 4 were on the subject of drought, making it the most important topic on which information was sought. Information campaigns have also focussed on the long and short term causes of droughts and the role of environmental protection in it. Sathins have been successful in getting proper remuneration for laborers in several cases and serve as checks on the malpractices on employment sites.

7.17 A note of the Directorate of Women and Children (1989) reports the case of Suwana village in Bhilwara district where local male contractor extorted Rs.10 from each of the workers. A woman named Bhagwati complained to the Sathin who in turn informed the Pracheta, PD and the Collector. A criminal case was registered against the contractor and the money returned to the workers. As a result of the efforts of the WDP workers, some Collectors have issued orders to appoint women as contractors wherever the number of women workers on a site exceeds 75%. In Banswara alone there are 12 women working as contractors.

7.18 The WDP newsletter frequently gives information about relief works and the new rules enacted.

WDP and the Generation of Income for Women

7.19 There is a difference of perception between persons who feel that an economic component must form a part of WDP, and those who believe that women and their groups should be relied

upon to make decisions in this regard. This difference permeates the entire management structure of WDP. A sizeable part of the management argues that the first step towards women's ownership of resources is gaining the strength to be able to assert their control. This, they argue, can only come about through the solidarity of women's groups. At the State level, women in IDS and the State IDARA held the latter view while most State Government officials, as well as UNICEF personnel, pleaded for adoption of the former.

7.20 The impact of this difference in perception can be seen at the District level. IDARA staff, and some PDs plead against quantitative targetization, but most District Collectors and some PDs feel that if a programme with so much potentiality has been started, it should result in some tangible quantifiable outcomes. The Prachetas are often hurt in this cross-fire.

7.21 Among the objectives of WDP set out in the original project document are providing credit to women through banks and cooperative institutions, initiating self-employment programs for women and improving in women's output from their existing assets. The first few training programs, however, brought about a fundamental change in the WDP approach. The training programs paid attention to sharing of experiences, improving communication capability, group formation and gave less importance to economic program areas such as employment and credit. There was also the

insistence that nobody had the authority to ask the Sathins and Prachetas to do anything in particular or to achieve any specific targets. Attempts by the District administration and the Panchayat Samitis to ask Sathins and Prachetas to help in family welfare, child immunization and poverty alleviation programmes were met with stiff resistance. Over a period of time, Sathins and Prachetas have become sufficiently reoriented to assert that it is essential to enable women to have a say in the economic affairs of the family, including matters relating to work and utilization of income, and the kind of training they wish to receive.

7.22 The sub-committee of the Ministry of HRD (1988):

found that some functionaries emphasized the importance of skill-development, training in production, economic activities etc., whilst others felt that WDP's thrust was on continuing education in issue-based topics and subjects which are of general relevance to the village community as a whole. We quote this example here, not so much to lend our weight behind one or the other argument, but to highlight the basic lack of agreement, within WDP on such fundamentals.

There is no doubt that WDP provides a powerful model for the process of formation of groups. However, what is to be done with groups so formed, is as yet an open question. It would appear that such groups can be very effectively utilized for income-generating schemes, for health or for education although it will require a fresh set of skills, personnel, and training to realize this potential. Also, the focus away from economic activities has been directed in part by the ideology and agenda of the

individuals and NGOs (notably IDS) who have formed the top management of the program. The NCSW feels that "from their (the village women's) unanimous demands for 'more work', 'more income', 'more knowledge', the time appears to be ripe for WDP to begin implementing their objective of Employment and Economic Development on a bigger scale" (NCSW, 1988, pg.viii).

CHAPTER VIII: PROBLEMS IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

NGO-Government Interface and the Structural problems in WDP

8.1 The delicate and volatile nature of the relationship between NGOs and government is brought out clearly in the organization of WDP. The most innovative aspect of WDP is the leeway it gives to NGOs and the absence of "controls" it emphasizes. In a government program, this cannot be expected to be smooth sailing and nor has it been so. But the importance of NGOs in the program has given WDP a vibrancy which must be retained. Also, WDP demonstrates that the government/NGO problems are not irreconcilable. The impact of the program on rural women and its vitality is ample testimony to this. Government-NGO relations are discussed at two levels: the State and District.

State level

8.2 WDP is not a high priority for the Rajasthan government. This is illustrated by the fact that as many as six officers have been transferred at the level of Director WC and N and two at the level of Additional Director. The sub-committee of the Ministry of HRD notes that this has caused an "erosion of leadership which has affected the vigour and the drive with which the Programme should have supported by the Government of Rajasthan." On the other hand, NGOs have had a continued

commitment and tenacity in developing the program. There have been fewer changes in personnel of the IDARAs (which are staffed by non-governmental persons). The indifference at the level of the state government has exacerbated the impatience of NGOs with governmental structures and processes.

District level

8.3 At one level, the importance of WDP lies in the fact that it has built on the resources available in the non-government sector to reach women, at another level, it does not clearly define the relationship between the non-government resource structure (contained in the IDARAs) and the governmental organization. The initial project document stresses the importance of flexibility. This has led to considerable ambiguity in the delineation of relations between the government and non-government partners in the program.

8.4 The sub-committee of the Ministry of HRD places the question of NGO/government relation at the center of its report. At the district level, the problem manifests itself in the PD-IDARA relationship, which with the exception of Jaipur, has run into trouble in all other districts. The difference between the two has affected the functioning of Prachetas and even Sathins, since parallel lines of command have emerged.

8.5 The IDARA feels marginalized by the PD who is a government functionary. The PD has all the symbols of governmental authority - an office, jeep, support staff and is well entrenched in the district developmental hierarchy. She has the "authority" to disburse salaries of field staff, and has disciplinary powers. There is no joint touring of PDs and IDARAs as was originally expected. The IDARAs are often not informed of the dates of jajams.

8.6 The PDs on their part feel that the IDARAs do not involve them in their activities and make derogatory remarks about the bureaucratic mode. The IDARAs have the kind of independence which PDs do not. PDs are often asked by the Collector to help fulfil targets in some government development schemes. The district IDARA is only accountable to the State IDARA and to the NGO in which it is located, and even in these cases the forms of accountability are not formalized. For instance, there is no clear job-chart for the IDARA staff, no chain of command for them, no evaluation of their work.

8.7 PDs, have a special relationship with the Collector who is the head of the district administration. This relationship is often seen by the PDs as an avenue for upward mobility. It is interesting to note that for all the PDs (apart from the Jaipur PD who was a medical doctor), the appointment itself was a promotion. In another case, one Collector sought to

systematically harass the PD when she did not give in to the hierarchical modes of the district administration, especially in her relationship with him. (See Annexure for an analysis of the PD/Collector relations in Jaipur district)

8.8 There is moreover, no single perception about the aims and objectives of the program. Each body/functionary has its own view and functions accordingly. This is one of the pitfalls of the ambiguity in the assignment of roles and responsibilities in the initial project document. The development of the program has not been recorded in any other formal document nor have fresh guidelines been laid down since August 1984.

8.9 Despite such problems in NGO/government interaction in WDP, the program has displayed continued vitality. Why is this? Firstly, at the top levels, Rajasthan has a group of government officials who are committed to the principle of positive NGO/government relations, as also to the loosening of government controls over development programs. Rajasthan has a tradition of amiable relations between NGOs and government, even though this is the first time they have come together in a government program.

8.10 Secondly, there is intense IDS involvement in WDP, which helps to mediate strained relations between the government and other smaller NGOs. Its role as trouble-shooter and

"counsellor" cannot be over-emphasized. IDS also has a number of women workers who have the trust of both government and non-government persons, and can therefore serve as mediators.

8.11 Thirdly, WDP has by and large had the support of district Collectors (with a few exceptions). The status and role of the Collector in activating the government machinery at the district level and his/her credibility among Sathins and Prachetas should not be underestimated.

8.12 However, additional steps set out below, need to be taken to further smooth the relations between government and NGOs especially at the district level.

- (1) PD-IDARA relations need to be clearly spelled out.
- (2) Monitoring, evaluation and accountability of district IDARAs needs to be systematized.
- (3) IDARA personnel should have greater interaction with the Collector to lessen their sense of marginalization. The IDARA can be made a member of the governing body of the DWDA
- (4) A fresh project document should be brought out incorporating the changed aims, procedures, roles and responsibilities.
- (5) Department and WC and N and the State IDARA should form a unified leadership through frequent meetings, joint communiques, and joint tours. This

would increase the confidence of workers at both the government and non-government ends. Unified directions should be sent to district IDARAs and PDs.

Growth of WDP and Some Problems of Process

3.12 One of the greatest achievements of WDP is that it has built up a cadre of village and block level women functionaries who are trained in the art of forming groups with special skills in communication. This has enormous implications for leadership of grass-root level women's groups. The Sathins in many ways answer the questions raised by Chatterjee (1989) regarding the required educational attainments of organizers, how groups are to be organized and how problems of leadership are to be transcended. WDP demonstrates that illiterate women can be very effective group organizers.

8.13 In the course of training, re-training and interacting with diverse levels, the Sathin has emerged as the nucleus of the groups. However, in some cases, she is isolated from the mass of village women and sees her access to knowledge, information and the WDP management as a power and a means of social mobility. The ambitious among the Sathins have used this to "promote" themselves as trainer and selector of other Sathins, rather than a former of groups at the village level. There is no study to show the numbers of such Sathins, but the accent in WDP on Sathin

selection. Sathin training, Sathin newsletter, Sathin report and even Sathin village, establishes this point to a considerable extent.

8.14 The Sathin has emerged as the sole animator in the process of group-formation. Yet, an analysis of the WDP newsletter, Sathin Ro Kagad, shows that in some cases, the task of forming groups seems too intimidating for an individual worker. For these women, it may be more desirable after the initial Sathin training, to organize a subsequent training of a group of women from one village. These women should be preferably from different castes, and thus, able to form a core group of leaders and mobilize women of different communities. That groups of women from different communities can work as a team has been amply demonstrated at various points in WDP. Women from all castes are working as Sathins and the training is conducted for women from all castes together.

8.15 The women of the core-group could be selected by the Sathin and the Pracheta with the guidance of the DWDA and the IDARA, who would make sure that group is a representative one in terms of castes membership. This core group could then be a reference group for interaction among village women. Alternatively, a group comprising the Sathin, the Anganwadi worker and auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) can be trained together. While no recipe for the building of such a core group can be

propagated, it is important to provide support to the Sathin. Mahila Samakhya, a program discussed later attempts to do this by building a team of two women, as group-leaders in a village.

8.16 WDP has demonstrated beyond doubt that groups can be formed and group action can successfully be undertaken. However, it stops at the formation of groups and does not address itself to the question of the long-term objectives or the structure of such groups. Since groups are not built around a particular issue their membership tends to be floating and not regular. The energy which has been generated in response to individual issues, has not been channelled towards activities which would over time, help women gain control over resources.

8.17 WDP managers have been preoccupied with the training--> communication--> interaction process. Too much focus on this runs the risk that training may become an end in itself. The question -"training for what" needs to be asked. Training sessions become such an intense, personal experience for the trainers as well as the trainees that it becomes difficult to view the "outside" world realistically. In fact, Sathins and Prachetas internalize the idiom of women's solidarity and a new feminist self-image so completely that they sometimes lose the idiom with which to communicate with the village women.

CHAPTER IX: PROGRAM FUNDING

9.1 Of the six districts originally taken up under WDP, five were funded by UNICEF and one by the State Government through its Tribal Area Development Program (TAD). The original financial estimates showed an initial annual expenditure of Rs 5,450,000 (1984-85) followed by an annual expenditure of Rs 5,000,000 for five districts. The non-recurring expenditure for each MVK came to Rs 1,300 and the recurring expenditure including training, to Rs 5,700.

9.2 Currently, nine districts are covered under WDP (Jaipur, Ajmer, Bhilwara, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Banswara, Kota, Sikar and Dungarpur). UNICEF provides assistance for six DWDAs and the costs of 11 posts of Headquarter. Kota, Sikar and Banswara DWDAs are funded by the State Government through the TAD program and the grant made available through UNFPA. UNICEF has withdrawn support for headquarter expenditure from January 4, 1989 and for the entire program from 1990.

9.3 An analysis of the estimates for Jaipur district for the year 1987 from UNICEF records, shows that 65% of the expenditure is on staff salaries, 11% on training, and 4% on learning material. The remaining 20% of the expenditure is on

rent and office expenses, program expenditure, including travel and a contingency grant to MVKs. The total amount spent on Jaipur was estimated to be Rs.748,000.

9.4 The State IDARA and IDS were to receive Rs.150,000 each. The state headquarter was to receive Rs.240,000. The average spent per DWDA was estimated to be Rs.775,000 and the average for each district IDARA Rs.150.000.

9.5 Chakraverti has, on the basis of the original project estimates computed the cost of one effective Sathin to be Rs. 42,000 annually, and Rs. 840,000 per effectively covered district. More recent government estimates show the cost per effectively covered district to be Rs.728,000. This is lower than the original estimates because the number of MVK buildings planned for have not been constructed.

CHAPTER X: MAHILA SAMAKHYA AND GROUP FORMATION FOR EDUCATION

10.1 In an effort to replicate the WDP experience beyond Rajasthan, a "program for education for women's equality" was initiated in 10 districts of Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh in May 1988. The program called Mahila Samakhya has a budget of Rs. 7 crores, and draws its ideological substance from the National Policy on Education (1986) which emphasizes the need for the "positive, interventionist role (on the part of the Government) in the empowerment of women." This new program aims to create a mechanism which will enable women to take a more positive part in decisions concerning themselves, especially in the field of their own education and access to new areas of information.

10.2 The program components, support services and program implementation structure as laid out in the document "Mahila Samakhya" are much more intricate and comprehensive than those delineated in a similar policy outline for WDP. But the document draws extensively from the experience of WDP in its body and format.

10.3 Mahila Samakhya is set up to have a network of resource facilities from the village, right up to the national level drawing from governmental as well as non-governmental sources. Emphasis will be on adult and non-formal education which is

responsive to the perceived needs of the beneficiary women. The annual report on the Mahila Samakhya project sees the main objective of the program as empowerment through education but conscious that, "education is invariably confused with literacy." Its premise is that when women are involved in awareness generation activities for minimum wages, credit, environmental protection, they come to demand literacy. It sees education in the broadest sense of learning of skills.

Organizational structure

10.4 The organizational structure of Mahila Samakhya is very close to that of WDP. At the village level, it is proposed to have Women's Activity Centers of Mahila Sanghas with two women as the principal initiators of the group. The Mahila Sanghas are to be supervised by one coordinator or Sahayogini.

10.5 At the District level is a District Implementation Unit (DIU) which is a branch office of the Mahila Samakhya Society and consists of a District Program Coordinator, a resource person, support staff and the District Resource Unit for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AENFE).

10.6 The District Program Coordinator is drawn from the non-government sector, and has experience in the field of Women's Development or Education. The DIU organizes and conducts training programs for all the program functionaries at the

District level. It draws upon resource persons who are hired to conduct training programs. The DIU coordinates with the State Program Coordinator and the National Resource Group and draws upon their resources as and when the need arises.

10.7 There is a training cell within the District Implementation Unit, to cater to the training and educational needs of the AE and NFE instructors and the Village School Teachers. Eventually, this will become the District Resource Unit (DRU) of the District Institutes of Education and Training as and when it is set up in the districts. A District Resource Group is set up to advise and guide the program and consists of a committee which is to meet at regular intervals.

10.8 At the State level, the Mahila Samakhya Society is a registered society with a General Council with the Chief Minister of the State at its head. The Executive Committee is involved with the actual administration of the program. It consists of the Education Secretary, State Program Coordinator, District Program Coordinators, nominees of the National Resource group and Director of the technical resource agency.

10.9 The State Program Director is the administrative head of the program in the concerned State. Of the two Directors appointed so far (in Gujarat and Karnataka), one is an IAS

officer and the other a non-Government person with experience in the voluntary sector. Both are women.

10.10 Following the WDP experience, evaluation is seen as a continuous process built into the operational strategy of the program. A voluntary agency or a social science institute will be selected by the National Resource Group in consultation with the State Government to function as the State Information Training and Resource Agency (SITARA) in each State.

It will be involved in :

- (i) Evaluation, periodic reviews and monitoring and building feed-back mechanisms;
- (ii) Generation and dissemination of information, to the Mahila Sanghas and the Sahayoginis;
- (iii) Publication of teaching-learning material, newsletters etc.,
- (iv) Documentation of the experiences of the program; and
- (v) Participation in the training programs, meetings and workshops.

10.11 At the national level, a National Resource Group comprising of educationists, social workers, activist women, etc., was set up in the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, as the apex body to direct, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the program. The NRG

has been responsible for mobilizing the support of suitable voluntary agencies in each district. The National Program Coordinator is the Member-Secretary of the NRG. She is assisted by Consultants, one Research Associate and supporting staff.

Initial Implementation

10.12 The State Program Directors have been appointed in Karnataka and Gujarat. A sum of Rs. 1,10,64,550 has been released to each of the two states. The process for the selection of district level staff is underway. Training programs have been conducted for field staff in two districts of Uttar Pradesh, one district of Gujarat and three districts of Karnataka. The process of increasing the number of Mahila Sanghas or building of huts can only be initiated after the district level structure is set up.

10.13 Nine NGOs have been working with the Ministry of Education pending the setting up of state level administrative arrangements. The NGOs have helped in identifying Sahayoginis, Mahila Sangha coordinators and conducting training programs for them. The NGOs are:

- (1) Sahej, Baroda
- (2) A. Saghan Kshetra Vikas Samiti, Varanasi
B. Jagori, New Delhi for training in Varanasi
- (3) AIKYA, Bidar
- (4) SETU, Ahmedabad, for Sabarkanta District

- (5) Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra, Mysore
- (6) Akhil Bharatiya Samaj Sewa, Manikpur, Banda
- (7) SEARCH, Bangalore for training in Bijapur
- (8) A. DISHA, for Saharanpur
 - B. ALARIPU for training in Saharanpur
- (9) PRIA, Banda

10.14 One of the problems faced by the Ministry of Education in the initial implementation of the program has related to the administrative structure envisaged for the implementation. There was no precedent for the implementation of government programs by a nodal state agency which was a registered society. Rules therefore had to be altered to enable the registration of State Level Societies.

Government NGO Interaction in the Launching of Mahila Samakhya

10.15 Mahila Samakhya began by initiating a debate among non-government agencies to come to a clear idea of what the role of NGOs would be in the program. After several rounds of discussion with NGOs the project document was drawn up. It received the support of one section of NGOs who see the increased awareness among women as a step towards furthering the people's movement. Another section of NGOs has raised some issues about the identity of NGOs in a government program. These include the question of who would get the credit for the program, whether the functionaries at the field level would feel responsible to the

NGO (since the financial and administrative accountability control would be with the State Level Society), why NGOs should participate in the program if there is no financial gain to them.

The issues raised by some NGOs discussed above have impeded the launching of the program in the districts of Tehri Garhwal, some blocks of Banda, and Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, and Rajkot in Gujarat. In Bijapur district of Karnataka, there were no NGOs, so the help of the Zila Parishad (self-governing bodies) has been sought to recruit personnel and begin the program.

Basic Features of the Mahila Samakhya Approach

10.16 Mahila Samakhya has retained some of the basic, uncompromisable features of WDP which emerge as central to the process of group formation. Briefly, these include:

- (1) Defining education in the broadest sense to mean acquisition of knowledge, which may not necessarily mean literacy. In fact, it can even be extended to mean acquisition of skills for generation or control of resources.
- (2) Identifying needs at the level of village women, implying a degree of flexibility in-built into the process.
- (3) Creating a cadre of grass-root leaders who would form groups for knowledge acquisition. This is to be done through training which is to be a participative, experiential process on

the lines similar to WDP.

- (4) Establishing a technical resource agency which would fulfil needs of information and training for staff.
- (5) Active involvement of NGOs and women's groups at all levels, working with government officials as well as independent of them.
- (6) Flexible selection procedures which take into account commitment and local acceptability of staff rather than their educational qualifications.

Deviations from the WDP model

10.17 While the "non-negotiables" of WDP have been kept intact, Mahila Samakhya acknowledges that the process of WDP is the relevant category, but appropriate changes need to be made both to suit the nature of a new program, as well as to bridge some of the gaps in WDP. These include:

- (1) The Mahila Sangha has a physical presence in the village in the form of a hut.
- (2) The catalysts of the Mahila Sangha will be a group of 2 women who will function as a team, rather than putting the burden on one Sathin. They are expected to be both complementary to and checks on each other.
- (3) Organization of adult and non-formal education

centers to function in coordination with the Sangha.

- (4) Provision of child care facilities and provision for collective experiments relating to support services like water, fuel and fodder.
- (5) Vocational courses and residential condensed courses institutions to be set up to give women access to a range of skills for self-employment. These will include non-conventional courses (like electronics) to remove the sex-bias in training.
- (6) Clear and intricate relationships between bodies and functionaries are laid down and an attempt is made to form committees of officials and non-officials to bring them together in meetings, workshops, etc. An attempt is also made to bring together the functioning of the DIU and the resource agencies at various committees and form to obviate the PD-IDARA problems that arose in WDP.
- (7) Monitoring, evaluation and documentation procedures are clearly laid down.

ENDNOTES

1. Panchayati Raj is the name by which the three-tiered system of local self-government is known.
2. Head of the district administrative structure.
3. Third tier of the local self-governing bodies - at the district level
4. Second tier of the self-governing bodies - at the block level
5. The National Adult Education Program was started by the Central Government in 1978.
6. First tier of the local self governing bodies - at the village level. The selection of an area designated as a Gram Panchayat is on the basis of population.
7. See Roy and Jain for reflections on training for women's development.
8. For a discussion of communication in WDP, see Banerjee, 1986.
9. The panchayat house is the building of the Gram Panchayat, and the Anganwadi is a children's center, established under the Integrated Child Development Services as a delivery point for nutritional supplements, immunization, and other child development services.
10. The word "famine" is often used interchangeably with "drought" in this paper. This is because drought relief works are guided by the "Famine Code", which is a manual that guides the prevention of famine. However, in Rajasthan "famine" and "drought" are often used synonymously, even though the word means the latter.

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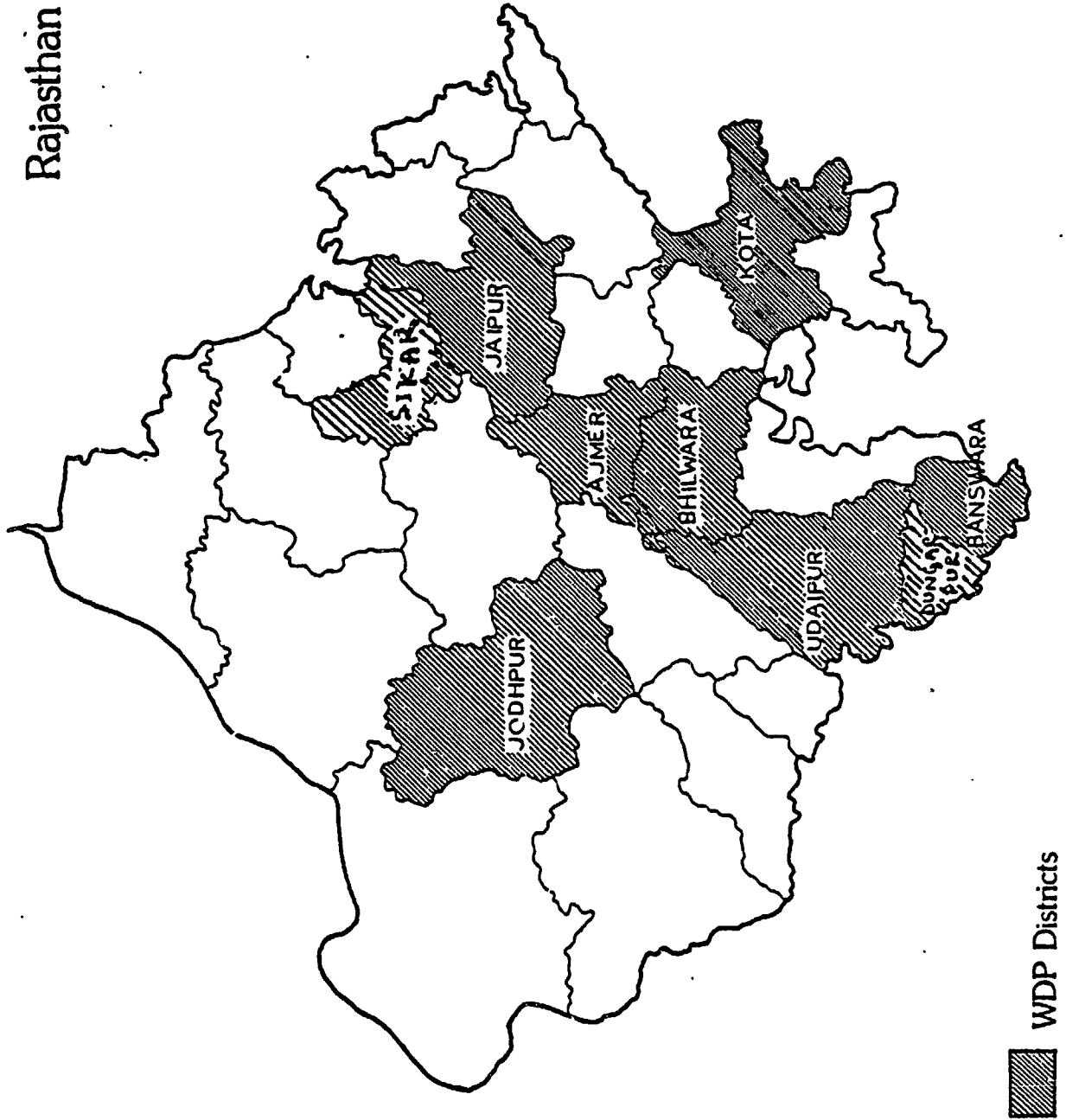
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Rajasthan



SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, BY STATES, 1971 & 1981

State/ Union Territory	1981 Area (¹ 000 sq.m.)	Population (million)		Population Density (persons per sq.m.)	Growth Rate 1971-81 (% p.a.)	1981 Sex Ratio	Urban Population (% of total)		1981 Literacy Rate			1981 workers (c) as % of total population			Vital Rates Avg. of 1971-81	
		1971	1981				1971	1981	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate
Andhra Pradesh	275.1	43.50	53.55	195	2.10	1,026	19.3	23.3	39.3	20.4	29.9	57.68	33.54	45.76	31.5	11.6
Assam	78.4	14.63	19.90 (a)	254 (a)	3.09 (a)	1,110 (a)	8.8	10.3 (a)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	32.7	11.4
Bihar	173.9	56.35	69.91	402	2.17	1,057	10	12.5	38.1	13.6	26.2	50.18	13.5	32.35	38.4	14.7
Gujarat	196.1	26.70	34.09	174	2.46	1,061	28.1	31.1	54.4	32.3	43.7	52.91	20.66	37.27	35.1	12.4
Karnataka	44.2	10.04	12.92	292	2.55	1,149	17.7	21.9	48.2	22.3	36.1	49.93	10.61	31.63	36.8	11
Madhya Pradesh	55.7	3.46	4.28	77	2.15	1,028	7	7.6	53.2	31.5	42.5	52.63	31.88	42.4	31.6	10.8
Jammu & Kashmir	222.2	4.62	5.99	59	2.58	1,121	18.6	21.1	36.3	15.9	26.7	55.82	31.32	44.27	31.3	9.3
Kerala	191.8	29.30	37.14	196	2.39	1,038	24.3	28.9	48.8	27.7	38.5	54.6	25.33	40.24	28.2	9.8
Kerala	38.9	21.35	25.45	654	1.77	969	18.2	18.7	75.3	65.7	70.4	44.89	16.61	30.53	26.2	6.9
Madhya Pradesh	443.5	41.65	52.18	118	2.27	1,063	16.3	20.3	39.5	15.5	27.9	54.46	30.64	42.92	37.4	15.6
Maharashtra	307.7	50.41	62.78	204	2.21	1,067	31.2	35	58.8	34.8	47.2	53.73	30.63	42.56	28.3	10
Manipur	22.3	1.07	1.42	64	2.63	1,030	13.1	26.5	53.3	29.1	41.4	46.8	39.49	43.2	29	6.6
Meghalaya	22.4	1.01	1.34	60	2.80	1,048	14.5	18	59.9	30.1	34.1	53.98	37.48	45.93	32.3	10.4
Nagaland	16.6	0.52	0.78	47	4.09	1,159	9.9	15.5	50.1	33.9	42.6	52.59	43.19	48.24	22.4	6.5
Orissa	155.7	21.94	26.57	169	1.85	1,019	8.4	11.8	47.1	21.1	34.2	55.86	19.81	38.01	31.8	14
Punjab	50.4	13.55	18.77	333	2.16	1,138	23.7	27.7	47.2	33.7	40.9	53.76	6.16	31.5	29.6	9.2
Rajasthan	342.2	25.77	34.26	100	2.67	1,088	17.6	21	36.3	11.4	24.4	50.9	21.08	36.61	36.8	13.3
Sikkim	7.1	0.21	0.32	45	4.14	1,198	9.5	16.1	44	22.2	34.1	57.11	37.64	48.24	n.e.	n.e.
Tamil Nadu	130.1	41.20	48.41	372	1.63	1,024	30.2	33	58.3	35	46.8	56.56	26.52	41.73	28.2	11.7
Tripura	10.5	1.56	2.05	195	2.79	1,057	10.4	11	51.7	32	42.1	50.72	12.76	32.26	26.9	9.1
Uttar Pradesh	294.4	88.34	110.86	377	2.25	1,130	14	17.9	38.8	14	27.2	50.76	8.07	30.72	39.5	16.4
West Bengal	88.6	44.31	54.58	616	2.10	1,078	24.7	26.5	50.7	30.3	40.9	50.3	8.07	30.17	31.5	11.3
And. & Nic. Isl.	8.2	0.11	0.19	23	4.98	1,316	22.6	26.5	58.7	42.1	51.6	56.6	10.8	36.8	33.8	8.2
Arunachal Pradesh	83.7	0.47	0.63	8	3.04	1,160	3.6	6.7	28.9	11.3	20.8	58.59	45.76	52.64	33.1	15.4
Chandigarh	0.1	0.26	0.45	3981	5.67	1,300	90.7	93.6	69	59.3	64.8	54.72	8.95	34.83	26.7	2.7
Dadar & N. Haveli	0.5	0.07	0.11	211	3.38	1,027	-	6.7	36.3	16.8	26.7	56.3	41.33	48.91	34.6	15.4
Delhi	1.5	4.07	6.22	4194	4.29	1,238	89.7	92.7	68.4	53.1	61.5	52.67	6.83	32.18	27.3	8.8
Goa, Daman & Diu	3.8	0.86	1.09	287	2.39	1,019	26.5	32.4	65.6	47.6	56.7	48.2	21.93	35.19	17.7	7.8
Lakshadweep	0	0.03	0.04	1258	2.37	1,026	-	46.3	65.2	44.7	55.1	39.31	9.15	24.43	31	9.8
Mizoram	21.1	0.33	0.49	23	3.99	1,088	41.9	24.7	64.5	54.9	59.9	52.18	37.85	45.3	n.e.	n.e.
Pondicherry	0.5	0.47	0.60	1229	2.50	1,015	11.4	52.3	65.8	45.7	55.9	47.16	13.51	30.47	24.8	8.3
Total	3,287.3	548.16	685.18	216 (d)	2.25	1,072	19.9	23.3	48.9	24.8	36.2	54.05	22.05	38.6	33.2	13.7

Note: (a) Based on projections.

(b) Percentage have been computed on the total population inclusive of Age group 0-4 years.

(c) Includes both main and marginal workers.

(d) Excluding Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources: 1. Census of India 1981. Final Population Totals.

2. Census of India 1981. Primary Census Abstract General Population.

3. Census of India 1981. Per Population Statistics Based on 5 Percent Sample Base.

4. Registered General India. Sample Federation Bulletin, December 1982.

ANNEXURE III

District-wise Rate of Working Female Population, 1981 (RAJASTHAN)

District	Main workers	Marginal workers	Non-workers
1. Ganganagar	2.34	7.10	90.06
2. Bikaner	5.95	7.23	86.82
3. Churu	9.77	10.44	79.79
4. Jhunjhunu	7.28	15.61	77.11
5. Alwar	4.30	18.45	77.25
6. Bharatpur	2.75	10.62	86.63
7. S. Madhopur	6.16	10.33	83.51
8. Jaipur	8.94	6.61	84.45
9. Sikar	4.87	11.16	83.97
10. Ajmer	18.95	5.73	75.32
11. Tonk	14.33	13.26	74.41
12. Jaisalmer	3.81	7.94	83.25
13. Jodhpur	10.34	5.81	78.32
14. Nagaur	15.86	8.76	75.38
15. Pali	12.96	9.99	77.05
16. Barmer	8.58	18.93	72.49
17. Jalore	6.71	9.17	84.12
18. Sirohi	8.63	10.39	80.98
19. Bhilwara	18.91	12.16	68.93
20. Udaipur	8.15	18.24	73.61
21. Chittorgarh	18.79	19.12	62.09
22. Dungarpur	7.12	30.97	61.91
23. Banswara	6.49	26.71	66.80
24. Bundi	11.97	7.34	80.69
25. Kota	8.38	6.93	84.69
26. Jhalawar	17.32	7.02	75.66
Rajasthan	9.44	11.71	78.85

Literacy Rates at District Level in 1981 (RAJASTHAN)

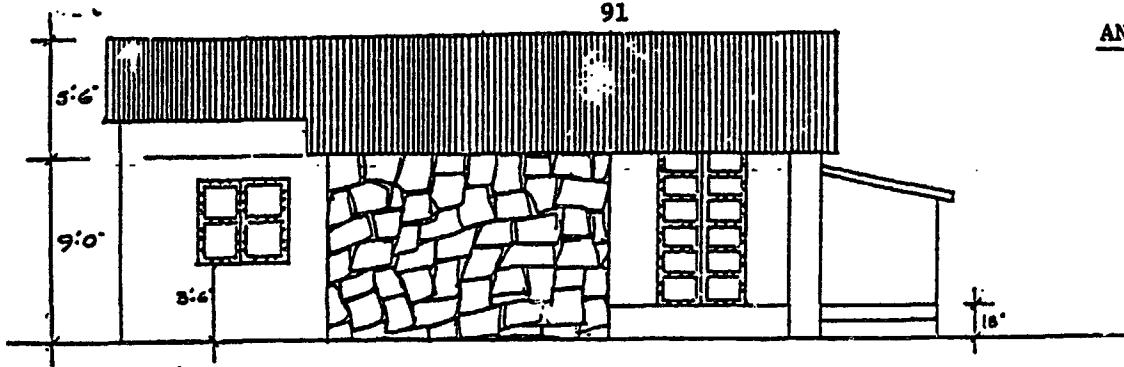
District	Literacy Rates					
	Rural			Urban		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Ganganagar	17.73	29.24	5.41	47.92	60.02	34.24
Bikaner	20.00	30.28	8.50	47.03	55.70	35.39
Churu	13.12	21.41	3.99	48.97	59.57	37.12
Jhunjhunu	24.81	41.13	8.28	39.02	54.17	22.35
Alwar	22.57	35.99	7.76	55.04	66.96	14.14
Bharatpur	22.02	35.60	5.67	44.44	56.13	30.64
S. Madhopur	19.71	32.47	5.03	43.66	57.98	27.04
Jaipur	19.78	33.09	0.16	50.78	61.78	38.13
Sikar	21.90	37.47	5.88	36.92	52.15	20.92
Ajmer	19.10	31.36	6.23	56.57	67.84	44.05
Tonk	16.19	26.08	4.64	38.39	51.49	23.92
Jaisalmer	9.94	16.86	1.64	46.92	61.24	29.04
Jodhpur	13.47	23.58	2.66	49.53	60.51	37.03
Nagaur	16.36	27.43	4.95	36.12	49.41	21.58
Pali	17.91	29.55	5.81	39.28	53.59	23.16
Barmer	9.11	15.83	1.78	42.17	56.93	24.85
Jalore	11.53	19.59	3.04	39.22	54.22	22.15
Sirohi	13.42	21.99	4.71	50.09	63.82	34.72
Bhilwara	15.45	24.97	5.42	45.48	58.92	30.64
Udaipur	15.72	26.18	5.20	56.66	67.94	44.04
Chittorgarh	17.40	28.88	5.45	51.08	64.43	36.08
Dungarpur	15.78	26.48	5.64	56.58	68.07	43.80
Banswara	13.95	22.86	4.97	59.28	69.09	48.12
Bundi	14.80	24.17	4.24	45.01	58.53	29.83
Kota	22.55	36.38	7.26	52.37	63.87	39.13
Jhalawar	18.16	29.83	5.62	52.70	64.95	37.11

Source : Supplement to Paper I, Rajasthan 1981 Census (Provisional Population Totals)

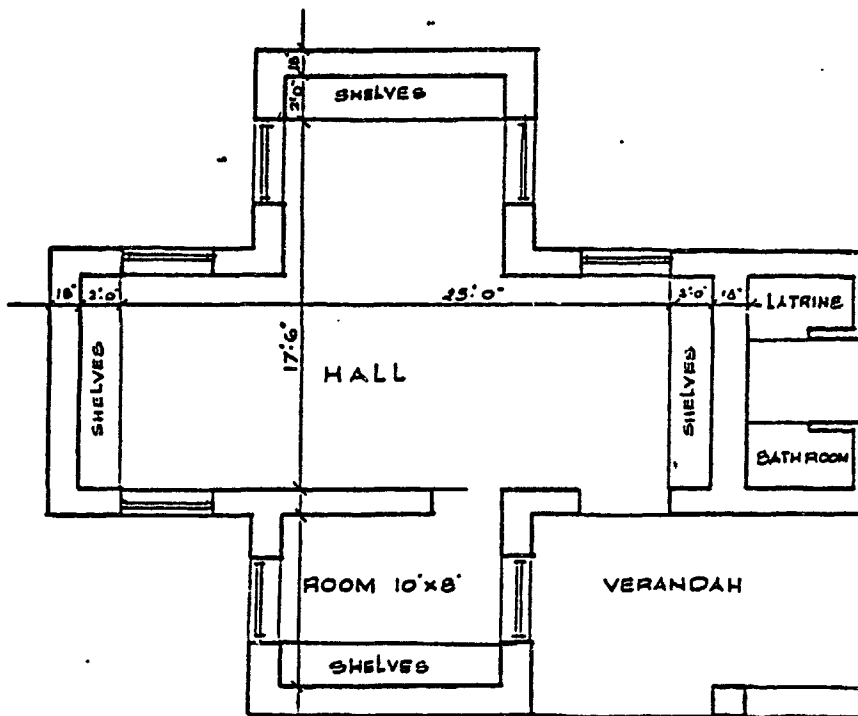
ANNEXURE V**District-wise Sex Ratio (RAJASTHAN)**

Name of District	Total	Rural	Urban
1. Ganganagar	881	995	831
2. Bikaner	902	908	893
3. Churu	957	960	951
4. Jhunjhunu	970	987	909
5. Alwar	900	906	858
6. Bharatpur	833	830	847
7. S. Madhopur	868	869	862
8. Jaipur	896	911	870
9. Sikar	968	972	952
10. Ajmer	930	953	900
11. Tonk	929	934	905
12. Jaisalmer	830	835	801
13. Jodhpur	914	934	877
14. Nagaur	962	971	914
15. Pali	948	962	887
16. Barmer	909	919	852
17. Ja'ore	943	949	879
18. Sirohi	967	984	894
19. Bhilwara	943	949	906
20. Udaipur	979	995	894
21. Chittorgarh	951	961	889
22. Dungarpur	1045	1056	900
23. Banswara	984	992	878
24. Bundi	889	888	891
25. Kota	894	905	870
26. Jhalawar	927	930	901

Source : Rajasthan 1981 Census



FRONT ELEVATION



PLAN

NOTES:

FOUNDATION*

AS PER SOIL CONDITIONS

WALLS

IN STONE MASONRY IN
LIME/MUD MORTAR WITH
LIME POINTING.

ROOF

STONE SLABS/TILES/
ANY LOCAL DURABLE
MATERIAL DEPENDING
ON AVAILABILITY.
STRUCTURAL DESIGN
OF ROOF AS PER
MATERIAL USED FOR
ROOFING.

FLOORING

IN ROUGHSTONE OR
MUD FINISH.DESIGN FOR WOMENS' DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
(MVK)

SCALE 0' 4' 8'

ANNEXURE VIITHE FUNCTIONING OF WDP IN JAIPUR DISTRICT

Jaipur was one of the first districts to have been identified for the WDP. With an area of 14,000 sq. km. it has a population of 3,420,574 persons. It has a sex ratio of 1104 males to 1000 females, and rate of rural female literacy that is the lowest in the state - 0.16%.

Distinctive features of the district having a bearing on WDP:

Jaipur is the capital and the hub of political activity in Rajasthan. Therefore, a program like WDP has a high visibility and comes under surveillance from a cross-section of politicians, research organizations, and journalists. It also has a number of women's organizations in the sphere of research and field-work. Hence, crimes against women, women's rights, child-marriage acquire political significance and get publicity. Being the capital city, Jaipur is also the administrative headquarter for WDP. The Department of Women and Children, the State IDARA, and IDS are all located in Jaipur.

The organization of WDP: Jaipur has 76 Sathins and 16 Prachetas. The PD is a medical doctor who left her government job to join WDP. The responsibility for the district IDARA has been entrusted to the Rajasthan Adult Education Association. It has well-known skills in developing material for training programs, and working with a large number of people including journalists, teachers, government officers and field workers. The same organization functions as the State IDARA.

Functioning of WDP in Jaipur: Jajams in Jaipur district have been held fairly regularly once a month. They are attended by the staff of IDS, IDARA and the PD. An analysis of the jajam reports of Jaipur district from June 1987 to March 1988, shows that drought relief has been the most important subject of discussion both in jajams and in the informal women's groups. The other important subjects for discussion have been accessibility of water, fodder, pensions and health, in that order. The group action has been concentrated more on the malpractice on the sites of drought relief works, and on the problems of individual women. It would not be wrong to say that group action in Jaipur district has been influenced by the more radical and feminist ideology of the workers in IDS, IDARA, and the PD.

One Shivar has been held in Jaipur (in February 1986). The topic was Panchayati Raj or local self-governing institutions. The planning for the shivar was a thorough process, with a number of pre-shivar meetings held to decide the topic, seek relevant information, and work out the logistics. An analysis of the shivar brought up the following details that serve to give a better understanding of the shivar and its functions:

- (1) There were seventy participants for the shivir including 40 Sathins, 13 Prachetas, four persons from the district and State IDARAs, four PDs/POs (from Jaipur and some other districts) three persons from IDS, The resource persons, representatives from the Directorate of Women and Children, and the Department of Social Welfare, participated for a brief while.
- (2) Information about the structure and functions of the Panchayati Raj was given and the malfunctions brought up.
- (3) The role of women as members of the village community, their rights and responsibilities were discussed.
- (4) A major part of the discussion was on the forthcoming elections to the village Panchayats.
- (5) The appointment of the woman representative of the Panchayat, which is done through cooption by the members of the Panchayat was discussed. Sathins and Prachetas inquired about how they could enter the Panchayat.

During the elections to the Panchayats in 1988, the WDP functionaries were very active in disseminating information about the election process, candidates and voting.

The concept of mini-shivirs was started in Jaipur in July 1987. Up to April 1988, 5 mini-shivirs had been held in Jaipur. Finally, the health project, discussed in the main text, was also implemented in Jaipur.

Management issues in WDP in Jaipur district:

The management issues in the district are discussed at two levels: firstly, the relations between the PD and the district Collector and secondly, between NGOs and the government at the district level.

The relations between the Collector and the PD were characterized by mutual distrust and even some contempt. The Collector was at once opposed to the ideals of WDP and to the personality of the PD. He wanted the PD to be another functionary in charge of a government program, and to use WDP to meet targets for family-planning. He and disapproved of the content of training being imparted to the field-level functionaries. Other ways of "bringing the PD under control" were not approving her tour program, controlling her use of the government vehicle and telephone.

The PD on her part had comparatively radical ideas on women's development, with a style that was vocally opposed to patriarchial structures. She addressed the question of the role of women in the family and society and crimes against women with greater emphasis than access of women to specific development programs. She was sometimes critical of the bureaucratic procedures and hierarchy, and few attempts to link up with the District Rural Development Agency (which is also headed by the Collector, but has another officer in charge of the day-to-day functioning). This was probably one of the reasons that Jaipur has had maximum group-actions relating to individual issues like rape, corruption as it affected individual women. The major strength of the PD was her ability to communicate with village women and to mobilize them on issues and her motivation. Since she was a trained medical doctor, she also had a distinct understanding of women's lives and compulsions.

The relations of the PD to the district and State IDARAs and the IDS was close and very positive. The staff from all these agencies toured together and met informally several times in the course of a month. The PD kept the other agencies well informed about the activities of the DWDA. In that sense, Jaipur district has been an exception in the functioning of the program. Instead of the PD forming a "governmental coalition" against the NGOs as was the case in other districts, she conformed more to the non-governmental procedures and ethos.

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